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Zero Retries is an independent newsletter promoting technological innovation in and adjacent to Amateur Radio, and Amateur Radio as (literally) a license to experiment with and learn about radio technology. Radios are computers - with antennas! Now in its fourth year of publication, with 2700+ subscribers.

About Zero Retries

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Request To Send

Commentary by Editor Steve Stroh N8GNJ

Time goes fast at a big conference, and sleep, energy, and leg strength is at a premium. I'm finishing this early on Friday and setting it to autopublish at the usual 15:30 Pacific.

I *may* update this issue prior to publication at 18:30 Eastern, but I can't quite foresee how the day will unfold as I'm in the thick of things at Hamvention, particularly attending seminars and showing off (and seeing and using for the first time) IP400.

# # #

Unexpected Conversations 1

An Amateur Radio colleague and I chatted briefly on Thursday 2025-05-15 and they revealed that they had taken a very specific knowledge base (years, perhaps decades) of an email list and other material (including scanned articles) and applied an AI engine to that material and now can query that "bounded AI" to ask open ended questions and receive distilled wisdom from the AI. When I asked if other material such as packet radio could be used with the same "engine", they replied "Absolutely" (but they won't be doing it, but perhaps helping with the setup if needed). I was thrilled to hear this, thinking about all of the material in Digital Library of Amateur Radio & Communications (DLARC). I'll be writing more about this as I learn more.

# # #

Video Field Recording

I really have to "up my game" regarding recording of video. My little inexpensive stand / carrier for my iPhone just isn't up to task of recording a lot of video, but my iPhone 13 Max is. The video recordings it produces with practically no effort on my part are amazing and more than good enough for my purposes.

I bought that phone prior to Hamvention 2022, and it was the first "totally top end" iPhone I've ever bought and I specifically bought it for the 1 TB of storage. I thought I might need to clear out some room for videos at Hamvention 2025, but when I checked the storage, I was only using slightly more than 100 GB, so plenty of room for more videos. But the Apple Lightning connector on the iPhone 13 Max is troublesome now when nearly everything has converted to USB-C. Thus I'll really be paying attention to those that are walking around with good "phone as camera" rigs and ask them where they got

their rigs.

# # #

One trusted advisor to Zero Retries chides me each time I apologize here for something I feel I didn't do well, but I feel an apology is due here.

I won't have time while attending Hamvention 2025 to do a "good issue" of Zero Retries. This one is the best I can do with the time I have prior to the start of the event on Friday 2025-05-16 at 09:00 Eastern.

So enjoy, and I'll do much better next issue.

# # #

My thanks to friend and longtime Zero Retries reader Ren Roderick KJ7B for the loan of his LILYGO T-Deck Meshtastic unit. KJ7B even loaded the Hamvention 2025 special firmware and I look forward to playing with it during brief downtimes while at Hamvention 2025.

I had other offers of units to loan, but I just didn't have time for playing with more equipment, so I gratefully declined those offers.

# # #

Have a great weekend, all of you co-conspirators in Zero Retries Interesting Amateur Radio activities, especially those of you joining me at Hamvention 2025 and saying Hi at the MMDVM booth 2805, in the Tesla building, and seeing and playing with IP400.

Steve N8GNJ

Leave a comment

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Hamvention 2025, Briefly

By Steve Stroh N8GNJ

I had higher hopes than was warranted for early Media access to Hamvention 2025.

I'm writing this Thursday evening after attending the Hamvention exhibit areas most of the day. I did not get to see any products up close nor talk to any booth personnel, so I don't have much to report.

My substantive Hamvention 2025 coverage will have to wait until next issue.

With that disclaimer, the state of Hamvention 2025 on Thursday, 2025-05-15 was mostly:

- Big booths being assembled
- Small booths already set up
- Those selling large, varied inventories are setting up.

Thus the few Zero Retries Interesting vendors that I was hoping to see early were either set up and gone, or had not shown up, apparently planning to set up early on Friday.

What I did observe from the vendors in attendance that there was a dearth of data communications capabilities in products, with a few exceptions such as:

-

Photo courtesy of Steve Stroh N8GNJ

- Kenwood (JVC Kenwood USA Corp) displaying a big poster of their forthcoming TM-D750A alongside the TH-D75A touting the similar capabilities of both such as APRS, D-Star, and tri-band - 144-148 MHz / 222-225 MHz / 440-450 MHz. The TM-D750A is Zero Retries Interesting because it has some native data capability, hopefully beyond just APRS. I chose this photo because it's the clearest display of the front panel of the TM-D750A that I've seen to date. With 13 definable buttons, it will be interesting to see how it will work in person.
- It's only fair to mention Icom that, like Kenwood, has incorporated "some data capability" in their D-Star portable and mobile products, including those few products that support Digital Voice Fast Data (DVFD) mode (reassigns most of the 4800 bps data stream to data) and Digital Data (DD) mode (128 kbps on 1240-1300 MHz).
- Amateur Radio Digital Communications (ARDC) which will be discussing, I hope, their forthcoming 44Net VPN service, which reportedly is coming *Real Soon Now*[1].
- AREDN Amateur Radio Emergency Data Network (MVMA) which was showcasing AREDN technology and units.

- Seeed Technology Co. Ltd. (shown on their website as Seed Studio) which, when I checked their website says:
  Exploring Reliable Wireless Mesh Networks with Meshtastic.
- And of course, the MMDVM booth where I'll be hanging out to display working IP400 hardware (and seeing it myself in person for the first time).

There were a few interesting exhibitors with little to do with data communications:

- Rabbit Laser USA has a large booth with operating laser engraving (and cutting?) machines. They're impressive-looking.
- FlexRadio apparently has a big announcement planned, per this big banner. My guess (only a guess - absolutely no information provided to me) is that it's an Internet service for remote radio access run by Flex.

I was able to do two video interviews with the new wireless microphones for my iPhone which I plan to post at some point.

Zero Retries reader Dave Sims W4HO emailed me about an interesting project unveiled at Four Days In May (FDIM) conference today - HF Messenger:

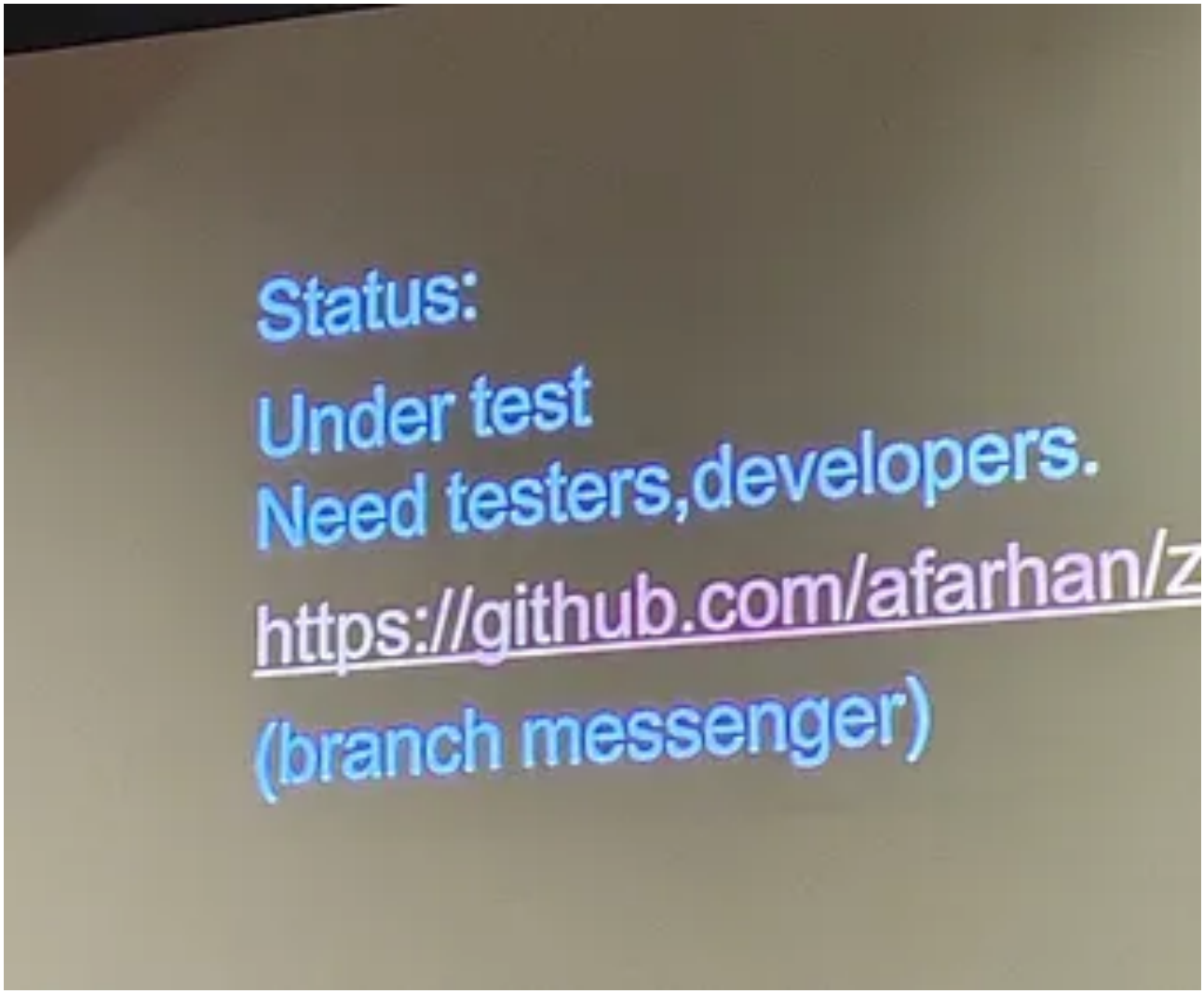

Image courtesy of Dave Sims W4HO

Per W4HO, HF Messenger uses FT8 messages but exactly how wasn't stated (in the brief emails we exchanged). I was able to find the exact URL - https://github.com/afarhan/zbitx/tree/messenger but it's not very informative - just code.

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ZR > BEACON

By Steve Stroh N8GNJ

Short mentions of Zero Retries Interesting items.

Getting Started with Ham Radio on Raspberry Pi

Longtime Zero Retries reader and longtime friend and Packet Radio co-consipirator Steve Monsey N0FPF said "Just a nicely done article." Agreed… but a bit heavy with popup and fly-in ads.

> Ham radio lets you explore wireless communication by listening to broadcasts, tracking aircraft, and decoding signals. However, traditional ham radio setups can be expensive and bulky, making them less accessible. I will show you how a Raspberry Pi offers an affordable way to get into ham radio.
>
> With a Raspberry Pi and hardware like an RTL-SDR or HackRF, you can receive signals, track aircraft and ships, decode transmissions, and even transmit with proper hardware and licensing.

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Comments Summary From Previous Issue

Comments from Zero Retries 0201

Another heavy comments issue!

- Several commenters responded to my characterization and explanation of "NewTechHams" that they saw themselves (proudly!) as a NewTechHam.
- Some discussion of being able to contribute to Amateur Radio by writing "higher in the stack", the more meaningfully they can contribute.
- A recommendation for a break from "heavy Hamventioning".

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Zero Retries Boilerplate

The **Zero Retries Store** is now open for business with quality Zero Retries branded merchandise and items being retired from Steve's N8GNJ Labs.

These bits were handcrafted (by a mere human, not an Artificial Intelligence bot) in beautiful Bellingham (The City of Subdued Excitement), Washington, USA, and linked to the Internet via **Starlink *Satellite* Internet Access**.

See the **Zero Retries Boilerplate** page for significant acknowledgements and other information relevant to Zero Retries. For new readers of Zero Retries, that page, and the **About Zero Retries** page has useful information to check out.

My ongoing ***Thanks*** to:|
Tina Stroh KD7WSF for, well, *everything!*
Jack Stroh, Late Night Assistant Editor Emeritus
Shreky Stroh, Late Night Assistant Editor In training

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This issue released on 2025-05-16

Footnotes for this Issue

To see the relevant sentence for the footnote, just click the footnote number.

1

A homage to the late great writer Jerry E. Pournelle. “Real Soon Now” was his way of referencing products which had been announced, but not yet shipping, with understandable skepticism whether products announced prior to shipping would actually ship at all.